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# = OUR WORK =

No. III.

## Our Work In Japan.

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TOKYO, the capital, is situated between 35° and 36° north latitude, while Ottawa is between 45° and 46°. Keeping this in mind, and also its perfect insularity, a fair idea of the climate may be inferred. Cold in winter, hot in summer, and damp the whole year round, flannel must be worn by foreigners all the time. Owing to the practical absence of ozone, the climate is enervating. One all too quickly loses the buoyancy and elasticity which we Canadians might always enjoy, did we not sometimes become affected with Americanitis.

The new missionary during his first year wants to do everything with a rush, complains of being hampered, that things generally are slow, all of which are simply indications of the pain of the engrafting and the acclimatizing processes. Many succumb and go home—the fittest survive.

The true work of the missionary is not restricted to saving souls—vital and fundamental as this is—his work is rather the saving of men and women, and establishing the kingdom of God. Our Woman's Missionary Society workers in Japan, keeping these points before them, have maintained a singularly high level of excellence, their work constantly tending to the production of strong characters.

Napoleon said that what France needed was "mothers." This applies with terrible force to Japan, where national sins, as Joseph Neeshima (a most potent factor in Japanese Christianity) said, are "lying and licentiousness." Let the Japanese woman be placed on her true pedestal as man's queen—his consort, not his slave—then motherhood can and will fulfil her manifest and high destiny in raising sons who will glory in that personal and social and national righteousness which exalt a nation, and who will gladly accept the dictum that chastity is obligatory upon all, irrespective of sex, and where marriage shall be elevated into a holy union, the reflex of that blessed union between Christ and His Church.

Oh! the profound and far-reaching effects of this work. Do the Christian women at home realize that the work in Japan means, not only saving souls from self and hell, but also building, polishing and strengthening them into symmetrical Christians, who will, in

turn, be absorbed in establishing the kingdom of Christ, rather than in mere "other worldliness"? Few, perhaps, grasp the wide-spreading influence and the moral sublimity of Christian women in Japan. There they are away down below the surface, perhaps fifty, maybe one hundred years, working gladly, for Christ's sake, deep down amid the moral gloom, with occasional glimpses of moral light breaking in on them! Would that the "waste-product" among our Canadian Methodist young women saw the transcendent brightness and glory of this work in the far East! There would not be so much "urging" and "pleading" needed, but the Secretaries of our Woman's Boards would be flooded with applications from those who are determined not only to do good, but to go where they can do the greatest good.

In Azabu (Tokyo), Shizuoka, Kofu, Kanazawa, we have girls' schools. My observations have been confined to the first three, mainly to the first. But the schools simply reflect those who manage them. Their aim has been not to please nor yet to displease the Japanese, but to do what is right, regardless of consequences. "If they must give offence, they are ready to offend, so far as the offence inevitably springs from the truth which it is their sacred duty to proclaim." Such tersely describes the attitude of our women in Japan, which is very noticeable in the character of the pupils they have been and are still

sending out. They are not simply "dainty, petite and naive," having no moral fibre, but in them are to be found those qualities which are the delight of the Master.

The work of our missionaries is in the day-schools, the Sunday-school, among the poor, the soldiers, and in the home. In the regular school work, discipline, justice and thoroughness are practised. No qualities are harder to instil than obedience and thoroughness. But our workers realize this, and resolutely set themselves to the task. Three, four, five years of patient training in the daily routine of school life, the organization of class-meetings, the King's Daughters, the hand-to-hand and heart-to-heart work of strong Christian women among their morally weaker sisters; but above all that genuine love for their girls, giving their lives daily for them, moulding, informing, transforming, illuminating—all have their effect. When their girls leave them, then love bears fruit in their gratitude and affection, in the re-unions at the school, but, best of all, in the living over again, in varying degrees, the Christ life. For the richest fruit we must wait a generation. Of its character we are certain.

As I write this, another mighty result of their work presents itself. It is the awakening in these girls and women the sense and knowledge of the dignity of woman, that she is man's equal, not a toy or servant

a fact of which the average Japanese woman is as yet but dimly conscious.

The Sunday-school is an indispensable adjunct. In it the advanced pupils learn how to work. Inseparably from and growing out of this has begun the work among the poor.

If there is anything which the Japanese samurai (the gentry) handles with dainty fingers it is the "lower classes." Blood counts for a good deal in Japan. When we see young ladies of good birth, and some of them of wealth, going down to the poor, the sick, the hopeless, the toilers, and not simply going down to them, but actually loving them, then we thank our God, then, too, we cease to wonder at our missionaries being so absorbed in their work that it becomes the greatest wrench of their lives to be obliged to leave it—and not only the work, but these girls whom they love, and who love them deeply in return. How true that the love of Christ blinds us to national distinctions. And again the wonder grows, yea, and our indignation, that Christian parents, while vowing allegiance to their Master, refuse their daughters and sons for "the greatest work in the world."

The work among the soldiers is peculiarly interesting, strangely reminding one of the work done by Paul among the Praetorians, an ambassador in a coupling-chain. These soldiers having found Christ through

the teaching of foreign Christian women, acquire a respect for womanhood never before possessed and never to be lost.

Another feature of our work is the employment of Bible-women. These visit the women in their homes. There is nothing of "glory" in it; it is but the faithful, patient plodding of simple-minded, trustful Japanese women among Japanese women. It means sowing the seed in dark places, in lonely hearts; but it has the elements of permanence—it is paradoxical, though true, to say this work is humble, but it is mighty.

So, among samurai, servants, street-arabs, soldiers, and in humble homes this work goes on, yet all too slowly, when its magnitude is considered.

When I think of "our missionaries" in Japan, I thank God that I have known and lived among them. They are a peerless band of women. One excels in one quality, another in another, but all are one in their unswerving fidelity to "principle," and in their unfaltering opposition to "policy" and "expediency" and "compromise" when eternal principles are at stake. The effects of such an attitude are seen in the solid character of the work done and in its progressive strength and beauty.

"Our women" in Japan will join with me in saying that to Mrs. Large, more than to any other, is the credit and praise of this satisfactory state of affairs

due. When one considers the awful importance of laying the foundation so securely that the superstructure cannot totter, we cannot be sufficiently grateful to the Providence which has vouchsafed us such master missionaries.

I fear that many at home imagine the work is well on towards completion. Vain illusion! But the smallest fringe of the work has yet been done. It is a high estimate to say that there are 40,000 Protestant Christians, missionaries included, in Japan. The population is about 40,000,000—one Christian to every 1,000 of the population. That would mean about 200 Christians in Toronto, 40 in Hamilton, 20 in Kingston 10 in Peterborough—or 2,000 in Ontario and 1,998,000 heathens. Christian mothers and fathers, never again make foolish comparisons between Home and Foreign missions!

In the Canadian Methodist “sphere of influence” there is a population of over 6,000,000, which represents many large cities, scores of large towns, hundreds of villages and thousands of little villages. In the province of Yamanishi (500,000) the Canadian Methodists are the only workers; in Shizuoka province (1,100,000) we overshadow all others, and in the other provinces within “our sphere” we have a work among an enormous population. I have no sympathy with the contention that the Japanese Church may be left alone (it would struggle, but it would live), but I fear

the disastrous effect it would have on our home Church. She, at the peril of her very life, must constantly be reaching out the helping hand to those who sit in moral darkness. Die she will, die she ought, if her King's last command become not her master passion.

O mothers and fathers, I plead for more workers, not only for Japan, but also for China and the Indians ; and when you sing that hymn of hymns,

“ When I survey the wondrous cross,”

don't, when you come to the last line,

“ Demands my soul, my life, my all,”

make the mental reservation, “ Excepting *my* daughters and *my* sons.” Rather count it the highest honor, the grandest privilege and the one ambition of your lives for your children to choose the noblest, the most enduring work in the world. “ They who lose their lives for Christ's sake shall find them,” and they only.

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“ They that be teachers shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars, forever and ever.”

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